THE FIRST LADY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

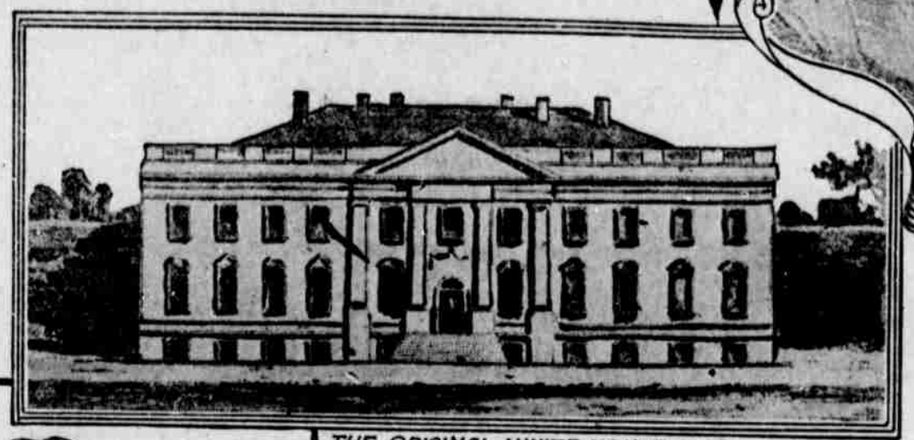
MRS. JOHN ADAMS, WIFE OF THE SECOND PRESIDENT, MOTHER OF THE SIXTH.

By HELEN BARRETT SMITH

THE GILBERT STUART PORTRAIT OF MRS. ADAMS

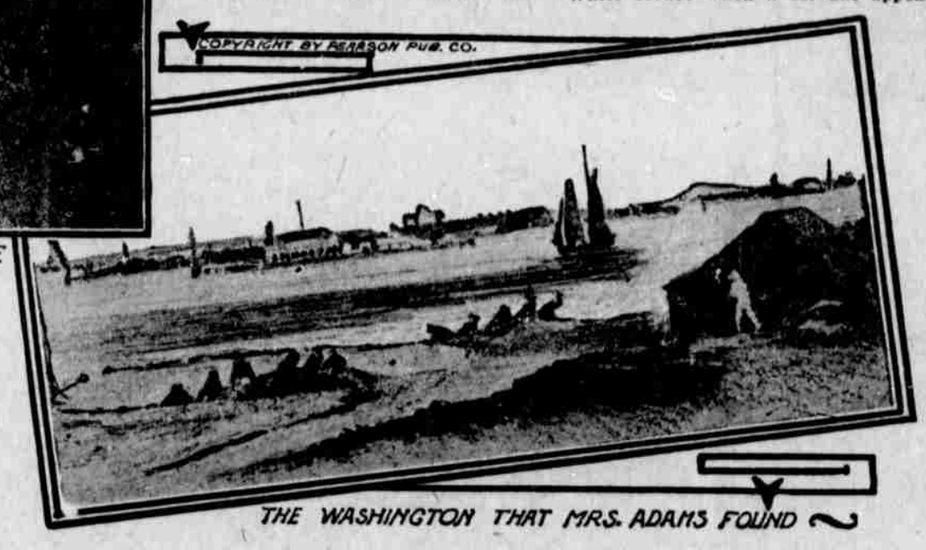
THE HE White House in all its beauty and completeness ready to receive its new mistress; the pomp and pageant attending her reception; the military splendor of Pennsylvania avenue, the din of music, the shouts of the multitude—all this is far and away from the home coming of that remarkable first mistress who was lost in the forest while trying to find the new capitol.

In June, 1800, the seat of government moved from Philadelphia to Washington, but it was November before Mrs. Adams left her home in Quincy for the White House. Did ever a president's wife have such a journey! It was up hill, down dale and through the woods by post chaise, stage coach and private equipage; long waits for relays, delayed on the highways by breakdowns; lost in the woods outside Baltimore until a straggling black was found to extricate the lady and her party with difficulty; on and on through forests; nothing to be seen but trees and occasionally a cot "without a glass window," and, as Mrs. Adams writes, "You can travel for miles without meeting a human being." Finally Washington—a city in name only. Pennsylvania avenue, a "muddy, wagon-rucked road," New Jersey avenue just cut through; scattered buildings in various stages of completion, and, at last—the White House.



THE ORIGINAL WHITE HOUSE

MRS. ADAMS, FROM THE PICTURE BY C. SCHESSELE



THE WASHINGTON THAT MRS. ADAMS FOUND

No lawn, no fence, no yard, no approach, the principal staircase not up, nor a single apartment finished, no bells, no lights, no grates, no means of heating the building. Mrs. Adams sits shivering and writes, "Surrounded by forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had because people cannot be found to cut and cart it!" It appears that our labor problem has always been with us. The faithful Brisler is the most distracted man in Washington; he has used all available wood to dry out the newly plastered walls of the White House. No more fuel at any price. Small wonder that Mrs. Adams exclaims, "We have indeed come into a new country!"

But this first mistress is by no means overwhelmed by the chaotic condition of the Executive Mansion. She declares buoyantly, "I am a mortal enemy to anything but a cheerful countenance and a merry heart, which, Solomon tells us, does good like a medicine." A New Englander by birth, the daughter of a clergyman, Abigail Adams had none of the austerity or puritanic prejudices of her day. What does it matter if there are only six rooms tenantable in the White House—Mrs. Adams is resourceful and self-reliant. When a woman has been through the revolution, her home surrounded by spies, her husband's letters intercepted, her supplies cut off; when she has been left on a farm with five children and tills the soil to support the family; when she has faced the terrors of Bunker hill and the siege of Boston; when famine and pestilence have spared none, and she has been robbed of her mother and her baby; when this agony and misery has been endured and the woman, through her sublime faith in God, retains sweetness of character—then the unfinished city of Washington is a trifle not likely to disturb her peace of mind. Mrs. Adams' chief concern is a desire to make it pleasant for those about her. Thus she cautions her daughter Abby, "You must keep all this to yourself and when asked how I like it say that I write you the situation is beautiful—which is the truth."

The fates made a happy selection in choosing Mrs. Adams for the first lady of the White House. No woman of her day had such a varied experience in establishing official residences. It was Mrs. Adams' love of family that gave her the courage to cross the ocean and join her husband and boys—John Adams was in France with Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin negotiating peace with England. Mrs. Adams took a little house at Auteuil, a suburb of Paris, renowned for the homes of its famous men. The gay court of Versailles, brilliantly artificial, the perfection of its polished surface hardly concealing the rottenness of its foundation, was a revelation to the American visitor. Very charitably Mrs. Adams wrote, "Manners differ exceedingly in different countries." Yet the little house at Auteuil became a social center. Diplomats, princes and artists gathered at her board. At one of these dinners an American lady, horrified by the Marquise de la Fayette's unpretentious appearance, whispered to Mrs. Adams, "Good heavens, how awfully she is dressed," to which Mrs. Adams replied, "The lady's rank sets her above the formalities of dress." Mrs. Adams' breezy comment on her countrywomen is refreshingly up to date; she writes, "I have seen none who carry extravagances of dress to such a height as the Americans here." But Mrs. Adams' home retained its democratic simplicity and she left to the French aristocracy the remembrance of a household that was typically American.

Grosvenor square, London, was Mrs. Adams' next residence. She became presiding lady of the first American legation in Great Britain—alas and alack, what empty honor! The English were smarting under the humiliation of losing the colonies. The king and queen were civil to the point of boorishness, the people arrogant and insulting, the press scurrilous and abusive, the nobility in absolute ignorance of the new nation across the ocean. Mrs. Adams declared that Mr. Pitt and Lord Carmarthen were the only two men in England who seemed to have liberal ideas concerning America. When, after a three years' stay in Grosvenor square, Mr. Adams was recalled to become vice-president of the United States, Mrs. Adams, in commenting on their coming departure, says, "Some years hence it may be pleasant to reside here in the character of American minister; but with the present servility and the present temper of the English no one need envy the embassy."

To New York City Mrs. Adams next moved her household goods. The vice-president's residence was Richmond Hill mansion, once the headquarters of Gen. Washington. Mrs. Adams was delighted with the situation of her new home. The city has stretched for miles to the north of this spot, now Varick and Charlton streets, but Mrs. Adams wrote that Richmond Hill was a mile and a half from New York. Wandering through the neighborhood of Varick street, with its Trinity tenements, and over to the shipping activity of West street and the Hudson river, one finds it hard to realize that here were once "fields beautifully variegated with grain and grass to a great extent like the valley of Honiton in Devonshire." These fields were to the right of the mansion and continuing her description Mrs. Adams writes: "Upon my left the city opens to view, intercepted here and there by a rising ground and an ancient oak. In the back is a large flower garden, enclosed with a hedge and some handsome trees. Venerable oaks and broken ground with shrubs surround me, giving a natural beauty to the spot which is truly enchanting. A lovely variety of birds serenade me morning and evening, rejoicing at their liberty and security."

It was at this beautiful home that Mrs. Adams gave her informal garden parties and delightful teas. With characteristic deference she left the brilliant levees, state dinners and dignified minuets to Mrs. Washington at the presidential residence, No. 4 Franklin square—as hostesses never were two women better qualified.

Bush hill became Mrs. Adams' home when the capital moved to Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the climate did not agree with the vice-president's wife; she suffered from malaria and had to take many trips to Quincy to regain her health. Although Mrs. Adams found her home on the Schuylkill peaceful and serene, she writes regretfully, "When all is done it will not be Broadway." So the allurement of "dear old Broadway" had not its beginnings yesterday; the famous thoroughfare had attractions distinctly its own 120 years ago.

Mrs. Adams had hardly arrived at the White House when a servant appeared from Mount Vernon. He presented Mrs. Washington's compliments, a haunch of venison, a billet from Major Custis, the son of Mrs. Washington, a congratulatory letter from Mrs. Lewis, in which Mrs. Washington sent her love and a warm invitation to Mount Vernon. Nor did Mrs. Adams put off the visit—she went the next week.

Oh, for the era of motor cars and good roads! Poor Mrs. Adams is appalled by the time required to pay calls in the wilderness city. Her nearest neighbor is Mrs. Otis, the senator's mother, who lives half a mile from the White House and many of the ladies are in Georgetown, three and four miles apart. Freight transportation, too, has its vexations. Mrs. Adams laments, "The vessel which has my clothes and other matter has not arrived. The ladies are impatient for a drawing-room." To add to her distress she had no mirrors, nor a twentieth part lamps enough to light the house. In moving, many of her things have been broken or stolen, her precious china set, so dear to the feminine heart, is more than half missing—How did the lady ever preserve a cheerful countenance and a merry heart?

Yet, in spite of all inconveniences, President and Mrs. Adams gave their New Year's reception at the White House in 1801, thereby establishing a custom that has since been followed on the first of every January. Mrs. Adams used for a drawing-room what is now the library. In entertaining she endeavored to keep up the standard set by the Washingtons. The first lady of the White House dispensed her hospitality with a lavish hand and was particularly proud of the showing made by the ladies at her levee. She declared, while in England, that the beauties of the court of St. James, the duchess of Devonshire, the countess of Salisbury and Lady Talbot, had formidable rivals in Mrs. Bingham, Mrs. Phelps and Miss Hamilton. Mrs. Adams was especially happy to welcome Mrs. Bingham to the White House—this lady, "the most beautiful woman of her day," passed most of her time abroad. In discussing the expatriated Americans Mrs. Adams expressed sorrow that they should "allow frivolity of amusement to wean them away from their native land."

During her stay at the White House Mrs. Adams watched with interest the workings of the first congress that assembled in Washington. She was always a keen observer of the political situation. John Adams kept no secrets from his wife. In sending some important documents for her inspection, he writes, "I daresay there is not a lady in America treated to a more curious dish of politics than the papers I enclose . . . by no means let them go out of your hands or be copied." Thus trained by one of the greatest statesmen of his day, Mrs. Adams had a complete understanding of the game of politics as played in all parts of the world. She was shocked by Marie Antoinette's fate. She grieved for her as one woman grieves for another; but this climax of the great French tragedy was not reached in a single setting. Of the many scenes that led up to that awful execution Mrs. Adams wrote with deep knowledge: "Were you to witness the spectacles of wretchedness and misery which these older countries exhibit, crowded with habitudes, loaded with taxes, you would shudder at the sight." In London she saw the great army of the unemployed, encountered the beggars at her doorstep, the homeless in Hyde park, and, in comparing this state of affairs with conditions at home, she says, "The liberal reward which labor meets with in America is another source of our national prosperity; population and increasing wealth result from it. The condition of our laboring poor is preferable to any other country. Comparatively speaking, we have no poor. America is in her early vigor . . . in a cheerful flourishing state."

MRS. ADAMS AT TWENTY-ONE

Mrs. Adams had implicit faith in the future greatness of her native land; she writes to John Adams when he is chosen chief executive:

"My thoughts and meditations are with you, although personally absent; and my petitions to heaven are 'that the things that are made for peace may not be hidden from your eyes.' My feelings are not those of pride and ostentation on this occasion. They are solemnized by a sense of obligation, the important trusts and numerous duties connected with it. That you may be able to discharge them with honor to yourself, with justice and impartiality to your country, and with the satisfaction of this great people, shall be the daily prayer of

yours,

A. A."

Standing at the cradle of the young republic, Abigail Adams "dipped into the future, far as human eye could see, saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that could be—" and to-day the present generation witnesses the truth of her words: "America has much to do ere she arrives at her Zenith; she possesses every requisite to render her the happiest country on the globe."—To-day may the spirit of the First lady linger within the White House walls; for, if the radiance of her personality be felt, it makes for happiness.

THE ESKIMO'S PIPE

The pipes used by the Eskimos are quite different from those of any other North American race and in the shape of the bowl more resemble the opium pipes used by the Chinese than anything else. The old pipes were very small in the amount of tobacco that they would hold.

There was, therefore, a wide, flaring margin to the pipe to catch any grains of tobacco that might be spilled in filling it; then there was a hollow which would hold a pinch of tobacco half as large as an ordinary pea and a rather wide hole passing down through the base of the bowl which fitted into the pipe stem. The bowl of the pipe was of ivory, stone, brass or copper.

The pipe-stem was curved and had a mouthpiece. It is said that the small hole running down through the base of the bowl and into the pipe-stem was usually plugged with caribou hair to save any grains of tobacco that might otherwise have passed down through this aperture and so be lost. The smoking of such a pipe would not last long and we may presume that a very few draws would exhaust it. The smoke was of course taken into the lungs.

The Eskimos are known to be extremely skillful in the representation of scenes and objects, while the Indians of Queen Charlotte's sound and generally all the natives of the northwest coast of America are famous for their carving in wood and in a black slate. Handsomely carved Eskimo pipes of walrus ivory from northwestern Alaska have on each side of the pipe, that is to say, on four more or less long, flat surfaces, scenes from the daily life of the Eskimo.

SPOILED THE MORAL

ACT MADE FLAW IN MR. PETERSON'S LITTLE SERMON.

Observant Reader Will Be Inclined to Come to the Conclusion That He Aided and Abetted Bad Boy.

Mr. Peterson did not mind being called a moralist. In fact, he was rather proud of the habit, which he sedulously cultivated, of discoursing in a high, ethical tone about whatever came to his notice. Mrs. Peterson, a silent, hard-working woman, listened to her lord's remarks faithfully, applauding and commenting at what she thought were appropriate spots.

One day Mr. Peterson returned from the village hot with righteous indignation and overexertion.

"These people!" he said, fanning himself rapidly with a palm leaf. "These people and their children! I am almost glad we haven't any children, Maria, for if we had, I'm sure we should train them up to be just as thoughtless and ill-mannered as the rest of the world."

"What—" began Mrs. Peterson, in her soft voice.

"Begging!" answered her husband. "Plain, every-day begging! And John Lincoln's son, too! The little rascal! I don't think he's six yet."

"He was five last May," replied Mrs. Peterson, with a readiness which showed that although she herself had no children, her interest in her friends' offspring was keen.

"Anyway," maintained Mr. Peterson, "he's old enough to know better." This was somewhat illogical, seeing that only a moment before a virtue had been made of the lad's youth. However, Mr. Peterson was a moralist.

"He's old enough to know better," said Mr. Peterson, "and he doesn't do better. This very morning, for example,"—he paused to emphasize again the fact that it was to-day, as if the date made an important difference—"this very morning I was passing by John Lincoln's house on Vernon street, and there, in the front yard, was his son John, junior, playing with the puppy. No sooner did the boy see me than he said. 'Please, Mr. Peterson, give me a cent.'"

"I am suprised that Sarah Lincoln's boy—" began Mrs. Peterson.

"I am not surprised at anything in this world," announced Mr. Peterson "after the things I've seen and heard in my life. I am disappointed. So I said to him, 'What do you want with a cent, John?' And to this he replied, 'Buy something.' If any boy of mine—had I a boy—were seen on the public streets—"

"What did you say to him then?" asked Mrs. Peterson, becoming a little impatient to get to the point of the story, as she had cakes in the oven.

"Why," said Mr. Peterson, "I happened to have an extra cent in my pocket, and so I lectured him for several minutes on the crime of begging and—"

"Then you gave him the cent?" said Mrs. Peterson, with an odd smile on her lips.

Her husband nodded. "I thought I might as well."—Youth's Companion.

Remarkable Railway.

Charles H. Warner, the sugar refiner of New York, and Colin H. Livingston of Washington are part owners of a street railway system which in one respect has no rival. In fact, Benjamin F. Dudley, a coal operator, who owns Black Mountains, Va., which, aside from its mining possibilities, has achieved fame by being selected by John Fox, Jr., as the scene of two of his novels, asserts that the railway is the most remarkable in the world. Bristol, Tenn., is where the road is situated, and some people ou there call it the Matrimonial Belt line. For a mile and a quarter the track straddles the Virginia state line, so that a man may be riding in two states at once. Parson Burroughs, a clergyman owns a hotel and meets every car, and the neighbors say that if two strangers of opposite sex arrive together the parson asks them if they wish to get married. Frequently they do; so the pars gets in with them and conducts them to his hotel, though not infrequently the ceremony takes place in the open, the bride standing in one state and the bridegroom in both, while the officiating clergyman straddles the line. Parson Burroughs admits having joined more than 3,000 couples in wedlock. One may drink on the Virginia side of the line, but not in Tennessee, and it often happens that one side of a street car is parching with thirst while the other is very wet.

Jack Tars in Church.

An experienced clergyman would have divined at once the cause of his congregation's wandering attention. The young assistant, being less familiar with the moods of churchgoers, noticed it, wondered at it and was unhappy. After the service he inquired of an usher what was wrong.

"Oh, it wasn't your fault," the usher assured him. "It was those three sailors that upset them. Next to a policeman the person who can create the biggest sensation in church is a sailor in uniform. Not often do the men from visiting warships venture into an up-town church. When they do the most fiery preacher in town loses his hold on his audience. In that mysterious way which news travels even in church, their presence becomes known, and throughout the service the clergyman and the choir have to share honors with the sailors."—New York Press.